

Sixth-graders getting chance to experience Ellis Island

By Ben Wood
Staff Writer

A tip from a state teachers' group magazine and financial help from Sonic are helping a Lexington Middle School social studies teacher bring an Ellis Island experience to the school's 70 sixth-graders.

"This will teach kids what an immigrant experience was like," said teacher Jamie Lynn, who proposed the project. "Kids will be an immigrant for a day."

The project featuring the New York City point of entry for immigrants will be done on Nov. 23 at the school, Lynn said, and she's seeking help from parents and other volunteers.

As part of the project, students will research their immigrant, their immigrant's country, dress in appropriate period clothing from their immigrant's country and pack belongings that are authentic to the period in a trunk.

The sixth-graders also will go through all of the Ellis Island stations immigrants went through years ago.

For example, Lynn said, students will stop by:

- A medical station, where they'll be examined for illnesses.
- An information station, where they'll reveal and fill out personal information.
- A baggage station, where their trunks will be inspected.
- An interview station, where they'll tell inspectors why they came to the United States, what skills they possess and where they're going.
- A currency exchange, where they'll exchange their country's money for U.S. currency.
- A ticket station, where they will purchase train tickets to their destinations.
- A deportation station, where they'll be held until deported.

"Three-quarters of Americans have European ancestry and many went through Ellis Island," Lynn said. "We want guest speakers (from the community) to talk about their families' experience at Ellis Island."

Many families in Lafayette County came from Brusnengo, Italy, Lexington's sister city, Lynn said.

Volunteers to man the various stations and hand out donuts and snacks throughout the day also are needed, she said.

ACE – Academic and Creative Education students – will make a Statue of Liberty to welcome the immigrants and a ship for students to depart from upon their arrival, Lynn said.

By participating in the project, Lynn said, students will learn history, geography and social trends.

"They'll learn about how immigration affected our clothing, our foods and the like," Lynn said.

Students also will prepare family trees during the project, she added.

Lynn said Sonic has purchased \$420 worth of supplies – paper, markers, journals, name tags – for the project through its "Limeades for Learning" program.

Lynn said she submitted the project to the Sonic Web site and received support from Shawn Meyer, manager of the Lexington Sonic, and others throughout the community in the "Limeades for Learning" program.

"I'm very humbled by the generosity of Sonic, other businesses, the people in the community and my fellow teachers," Lynn said.

To volunteer for the project, call Lynn at the middle school at (660) 259-4611.



Ben Wood

Lexington Middle School social studies teacher Jamie Lynn says students will be an immigrant for a day during the Ellis Island project.

Highlights from Capitol Hill

By Joe Aull
State Representative 16th District



During Thanksgiving week, I had the opportunity to witness an event that emphasized the fact that a lot of “great things” are happening in the public schools in our area.

I was invited to a special event at the Lexington Middle School where the sixth graders were participating in what they called the Ellis Island Project.

The project was directed by Lexington teachers Jamie Lynn, Cindy Magnifico and Lindsey Avitt, with the assistance of other school staff and many parents.

The 78 sixth graders from Lexington Middle School played the role of immigrants from many different countries who were trying to earn admittance and citizenship in the United States of America back in the early 1900’s.

The sixth graders wore clothing symbolic of their country and the time period, and they played the role of coming to Ellis Island in New York and entering the United States with both fear and great hope.

During the day’s activities, some of the student immigrants were accepted into the United States and others were deported back to their original country.

Those who were scheduled for deportation had a chance to make a final plea to a Board of Inquiry, hoping to be given a second chance to stay in America. Each student had to write a letter to their family telling them about their trip and their particular status, and the students ate a typical Ellis Island lunch of a ham sandwich, a banana, a doughnut, ice cream and apple pie.

At the end of the day, I had the honor of playing the role of a justice official and I administered the oath of citizenship to those immigrants who were allowed to remain in the United States.

I bring all of this to your attention because this was a great example of a group of teachers going the extra mile to provide a hands on learning experience which really made learning exciting and brought history to life for these middle school students.

I know that the Ellis Island Project took a lot of hard work and preparation on part of the teachers, but you should have seen

how excited the students were and how they got totally involved in playing the role of immigrants in the early 1900’s.

This is an activity that each sixth grader of Lexington Middle School will never forget and I am sure they learned so much more about this certain period of history than they would have from simply reading about it in a textbook.

I know this is just one of many examples of teachers and other school personnel going above and beyond to bring education to life and to give their students the most meaningful experience possible, and I am grateful to all of the educators in many different schools who put forth that kind of effort.

So let us all remember that, although our schools can always improve, there are many great things happening for kids, like the activity I just mentioned. I believe most of our educators are doing a very good job in providing a top quality education for our youngsters.

Again, congratulations to Jamie Lynn, Cindy Magnifico and Lindsey Avitt and all the other adults and students for a super activity and for giving a big kid, who is now a state representative, a day that he won’t forget.

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DAR Chapter learns about Ellis Island

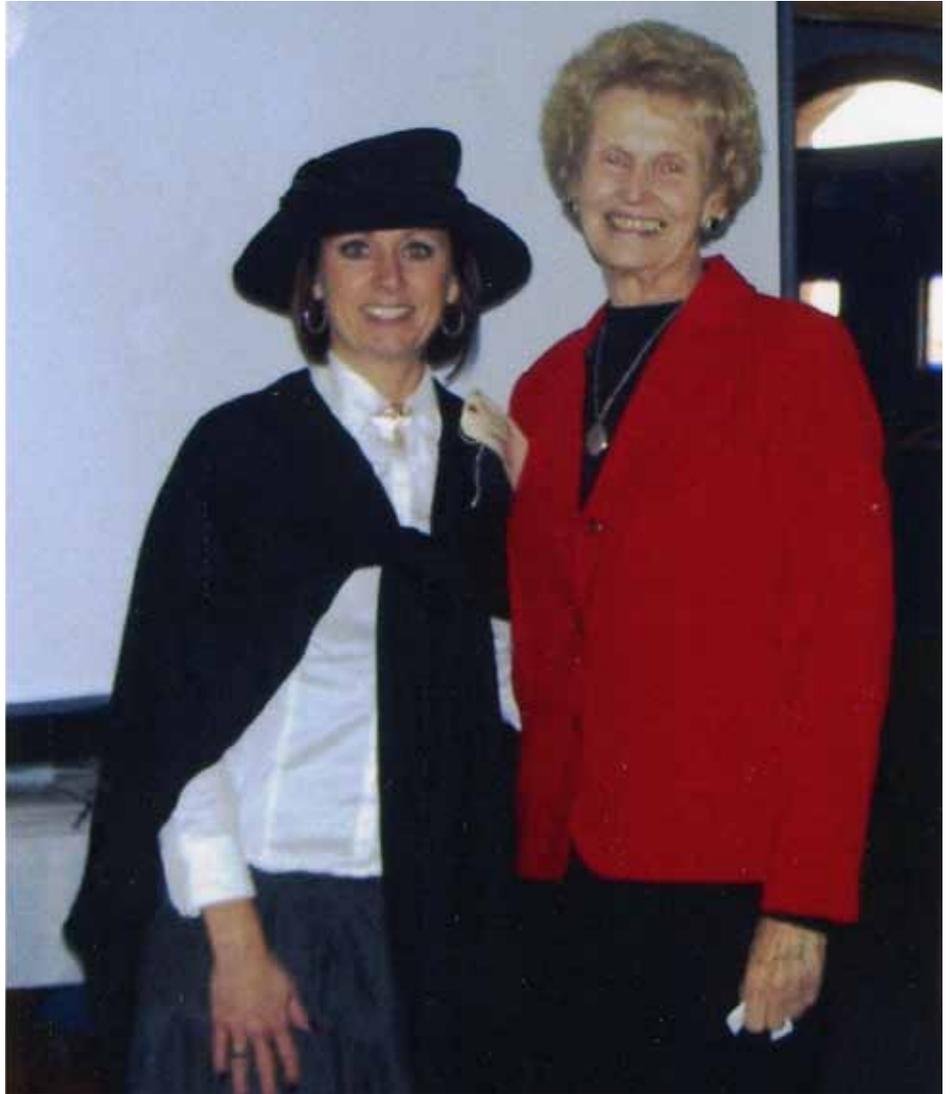
On December 15, members and guests of the Lafayette-Lexington Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) met at the Christ Episcopal-Church. A delicious lunch was prepared and served by Stacy Breeden.

The program for the day was the "Ellis Island" project that was presented by Lexington Middle School social studies teacher Jamie Lynn and sixth grade students Michael Summerlinn, Chantilly Williams, Morgan Adkison, Mary Beal, Alyssia Jackson, Breeanna Slusher and Hayley Fowler.

This school project covers the experiences of immigrants arriving at New York City, the point of entry for immigrants arriving from other countries. Lynn and her students were dressed in period clothing. Each carried a basket or suitcase of items they shared that included the few things that they chose to bring to their new country, America.

Many families in Lafayette County and surrounding area including Lynn's came from Brusnengo, Italy. This is an amazing project that everyone should have an opportunity to see. It is a very touching presentation. Lynn, who has dedicated many hours to the project, acknowledged that she could not have accomplished this project and its success without the help of parents and volunteers.

[The balance of the article covered the business meeting, announcements and upcoming events.]



LMS social studies Teacher Jamie Lynn and DAR program chairman Mary Borgman.



Sixth grade students pictured left to right are: Morgan Adkison, Mary Beal, Chantilly Williams, Michael Summerlin, Alyssia Jackson, Breeanna Slusher and Hayley Fowler.

Award Winners

Local winners of 2010 Missouri Community Betterment awards announced last month in Jefferson City received their awards at a recent meeting of the Lexington Community Betterment Association.



Checking In



Photos: Ben Wood

Left, students go through the delousing station before boarding a ship bound for the United States during the Ellis Island project, November 22 at Lexington Middle School. The project, headed by teacher Jamie Lynn, included a variety of immigration stations at the school and at the United Methodist Church. More than 70 sixth graders dressed in period costumes participated in the project.

Below, the ship La Lorraine, carrying the students, nears its destination in New York City.

